

***To Kill a Mockingbird* Summer Reading Annotations**

Annotation is **marking the text with insightful comments or questions** you have. Most proficient readers already do this in their heads, but as soon as they are on the next page their memory of what they just read becomes fuzzy, and analysis becomes a hit-or-miss game of trivia recall—you might remember what happens or what you notice...you might not.

Think of annotations as **“showing your work” while you read** just as you sometimes show your work in a math problem. You are showing what you are thinking while you read and analyze—and thinking is a word-based activity, not just a nebulous puff of energy. If you can’t articulate your thoughts, then you have to question if you know what you’re thinking. Thinking is how you connect to the text. This, of course, requires ACTIVE participation with the text, engaging your mind while you read, not skimming the page. Listening to your iPod or the TV can split your focus so that you don’t have as much of a connection with the text. Marking important sections can also be helpful in locating them quickly in discussions.

Some of the things you may want to mark as you notice them are:

Literary elements (symbolism, theme, foreshadowing, etc.)
Figurative language (similes, metaphors, personification, etc.)
Plot elements (setting, mood, conflict, etc.)
Diction (effective or unusual word choice)
Images (striking imagery that helps to create meaning)
Highlighting key words, phrases, or sentences and passages that are important to understanding the work
Writing questions or comments in the margins
Bracketing important ideas or passages
Connecting ideas with lines or arrows

As you mark, you begin to notice patterns the author has or where he or she deviates from a pattern and much of the work of a critical or analytical reader is noticing these patterns and variations. Notice that annotations are meant to be more than a “scavenger hunt” for literary techniques and rhetorical devices. Along with marking these you should comment on the effectiveness or significance of the device. It’s great if you can detect sibilance in a passage, but that in and of itself is useless unless you can tell that this sibilance demonstrates the mental breakdown of the character for example. It’s amazing if you recognize the hubris of a character, but how does this instance differ from those occurring previously in the novel?

Annotations: For each reading assignment, annotate the novel with the following ideas in mind as well as ideas of your own. You should have at least one annotation per bullet point.

Part One

Reading #1: Chapters 1-2

- Find at least two allusions
- Point of view: shifts between formal and informal diction (adult/child narrator)
- Intro to Boo Radley

Reading #2: Chapters 3-5

- Character development:
- Miss Caroline
- The Cunninghams
- The Ewells
- Miss Maudie

Reading #3: Chapters 6-8

- Theme: Jem maturing, compassion
- Changing perception of Boo Radley
- Character development: Miss Maudie

Reading #4: Chapters 9-10

- Character development: Atticus
- Theme: lessons children learn from adult behavior

Reading #5: Chapter 11

- Theme: bravery
- Reflecting on themes/character development in part one

Part Two

Reading #6: Chapters 12-13

- Character development: Calpurnia and Aunt Alexandra
- Role of women, Scout learning what it is to be a lady
- Caste system in Maycomb
- Theme of prejudice: race, class, and gender

Reading #7: Chapters 14-15

- Character development: Jem's maturation contrasting with Scout and Dill
- Theme: Adults learning from children

Reading #8: Chapters 16-17

- "The Roman Carnival" (159)
- The issue of "mixed children"
- Character development: Bob Ewell

Reading #9: Chapters 18-20

- Character development: Mayella Ewell
- Character development: Tom Robinson
- Theme: Justice vs. Injustice

Reading #10: Chapters 21-23

- Awaiting the verdict: Tone
- Theme: Standing in another's shoes
- Theme: prejudice in all forms (race, gender, class)
- Character development: Miss Maudie
- Character development: Jem

Reading #11: Chapters 24-27

- Scout's maturation in context of Boo Radley
- Theme of Hypocrisy
- Mockingbird motif
- Foreshadowing

Reading #12: Chapters 28-31

- Tone
- Mockingbird motif
- Theme of loss of innocence/growing up
- Characterization: Atticus
- Point of view